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RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1643  
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RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 001010

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MTS, PRM AND G/TIP

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KTIP](#) [MY](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR RAISES CONCERNS ABOUT TRAFFICKING OF  
BURMESE REFUGEES WITH DPM NAJIB

REF: A. KUALA LUMPUR 934 - AMBASSADOR'S LETTERS

[1](#)B. KUALA LUMPUR 799 - LUSE DISCUSSES TRAFFICKING OF  
BURMESE

[1](#)C. KUALA LUMPUR 495 - BURMESE ALLEGE BEING TRAFFICKED

Classified By: CDA Robert Rapson, reasons 1.4 (b and d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary and Comment: The Ambassador raised allegations of trafficking of Burmese refugees during his November 11 call on Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak, noting U.S. Senate concerns and urging Malaysia to take action on this issue. Polcouns highlighted the refugee trafficking allegations separately in a November 12 meeting with Malaysia's chief prosecutor, Mohammed Yusof, and a team of senior AGO officials who pledged to probe these reports with senior Immigration officers. On November 13, the Foreign Ministry contacted us to request further details ahead of the Ministry's discussions with the Immigration department. Coupled with the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee's heightened interest in these trafficking allegations, the Ambassador's discussion with DPM Najib and the Ambassador's earlier series of letters to the Foreign Affairs and Home Ministers appears to have gotten the Malaysian government's definite attention. We will watch to see if this high-level attention translates into action. End Summary and Comment.

[1](#)2. (C) The Ambassador met on November 11 with Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak and, in the context of discussing priorities in our bilateral relations in the lead up to the new U.S. administration, raised the issue of the alleged trafficking of Burmese refugees (septels cover other matters). The Ambassador noted the public allegations that Burmese refugees had been trafficked from Malaysian immigration detention centers to the Thai border, reportedly with the complicity of some Malaysian officials. These allegations had attracted the attention of the U.S. Senate, in particular because many Burmese refugees had been resettled in the U.S. and had become U.S. citizens. Senator Lugar had written to Malaysia's Director General of Immigration on this issue and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee would soon issue a public report. The Ambassador also had written to the Foreign Minister and Home Minister, he explained, and emphasized our wish to work closely with the Malaysian government concerning the allegations, which could adversely affect Malaysia's reputation if not addressed. The Ambassador also noted the importance of Malaysia becoming a signatory to the UN Convention on Refugees and related instruments.

[1](#)3. (C) DPM Najib, who was joined in the meeting by two senior Foreign Ministry officials, appeared unaware of the trafficking of refugees issue. He responded with concern

regarding the allegations of "mistreatment" of Burmese refugees inside Malaysia, and briefly questioned the point on official corruption, which the Ambassador reiterated. Najib signaled his appreciation for this information.

¶4. (C) In a separate meeting November 12 with Malaysia's chief prosecutor, Mohammed Yusof, and a team of senior officials from the Attorney General's Office, Polcouns highlighted U.S. concerns over the allegations of trafficking of Burmese refugees. Noting that the Ambassador had raised the matter at the Cabinet level, Polcouns emphasized the importance of Malaysia investigating the allegations, and taking action against any officials found to be involved in trafficking crimes. Yusof acknowledged the seriousness of the allegations and asked for more details, which we provided. Nordin Hassan, Yusof's deputy for policy, stated that they would pursue this issue with senior Immigration officials.

¶5. (C) The Foreign Ministry's Americas Division contacted Poloff November 13 and requested more information regarding the allegations of trafficking of refugees to assist the Ministry's meeting with the Immigration department and the drafting of a response to Senator Lugar's letter. Poloff provided details and urged the government to take appropriate measures against any complicit officials.  
RAPSON